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South Vietnam: President Thieu's political rivals are becoming more active, probably because they believe that his position will grow more shaky.

The strongest evidence of this is the sudden assertiveness of General Duong Van "Big" Minh, who has avoided the political limelight since his return from exile more than a year ago. Minh was the hero of the coup that ousted Diem in 1963 and chief of state for several months thereafter. He has declared himself ready to serve the cause of national unity and has called for a national convention which might lead to a "truly representative government."

Minh's remarks come on the heels of a speech last week by his former comrade-in-arms Senator Tran Van Don, who urged the creation of a neutral "third force" as a means of bringing an end to the war. Don has become more critical of Thieu. He has been hinting that he would like to be prime minister in a government headed by "Big" Minh.

At the same time [redacted] some of the more militant religious and peace groups have heightened their efforts to forge an antigovernment alliance, partly in the hope of being able to rally behind Minh.

Thieu has come under heavy domestic criticism because of his newest economic austerity measures. His opponents probably anticipate that continuing US troop withdrawals will weaken his authority and make him more vulnerable to new pressures. As a result, men such as Minh and Don may have concluded that the time is ripe to begin offering themselves as an alternative to the present government. Don, in particular, seems to be suggesting that the Communists might be willing to negotiate an end to the war with such a government.

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Communist forces carried out their heaviest attacks in nearly two months just hours before President Nixon's Vietnam address.

Some 46 allied military positions were shelled by enemy rockets and mortars. Nearly half of the attacks, as well as four fairly sizable ground attacks, were directed against allied bases in the provinces northwest of Saigon. Only the Mekong Delta escaped the rash of enemy actions. Although the attacks were considerably less intense than similar "high points" earlier this year, they once again pointed up the capability of the Communists to strike over a wide area of South Vietnam.

The timing and scope of the attacks suggest that they were intended to coincide with the President's speech. The attacks may also have signaled the opening of the enemy's winter-spring campaign,



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Czechoslovakia: Pro-Soviet conservatives have gained another influential voice in the party leadership.

Yesterday Jan Fojtik, a staunch Marxist theoretician, was designated as party secretary and probably will be put in charge of ideology and propaganda. In addition, Fojtik may also be given some responsibility for political education and party supervision of the mass media, in line with recent promises by Czechoslovak leaders to Moscow that they would move to increase the party's control over all social strata.

Once a press apologist for former party boss Novotny, Fojtik is the second of Novotny's former supporters to be elevated to the party leadership. His promotion dashes the hopes of those who felt that party leader Husak might lift the party's heavy hand over the mass media, culture, or education. Husak has repeatedly implied that some reforms would be made once the situation had been "normalized."

Fojtik's ascendancy means that four of the five most important portfolios among the eight party secretaries are now in the hands of conservatives, or would-be conservatives who have found it expedient to fall in line with Husak's moderate politics, if only for the time being. The conservatives could coalesce into a powerful pressure bloc in the party's top executive body.

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India: The struggle for control of the ruling Congress Party is intensifying, and a formal split is a growing probability.

Prime Minister Gandhi still plans to try to unseat party president Nijalingappa at a general party meeting she has called for 22 November. Her supporters have set up an office in New Delhi, separate from the regular party organization, to prepare for this meeting.

Nijalingappa gives no sign of stepping down and has branded Mrs. Gandhi's actions "out of order." He implied, moreover, that the penalty for attending such an "illegal" meeting could be expulsion from the party. His followers now threaten to support a proposed no confidence motion against Mrs. Gandhi when and if Parliament reconvenes on 17 November. He reportedly has also asked her to show cause why party disciplinary action should not be taken against her.

The situation is extremely fluid, and the two camps appear nearly evenly balanced. Mrs. Gandhi's control of the government machinery may give her a tactical edge, however. She can postpone the next session of Parliament until as late as February if she doubts her ability to survive a no confidence motion.

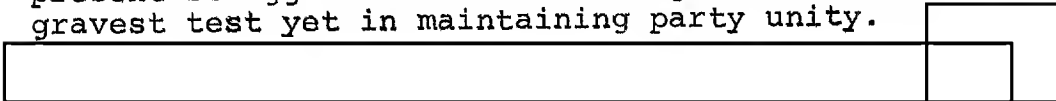
In the past, both camps have pulled back from action that would formally divide the party and thus endanger Congress' traditional one-party rule--the major source of political stability in India. Even if Mrs. Gandhi opts for new elections, it is unlikely that either faction would emerge with enough Congress votes to form a government by itself.

Yesterday the mediation efforts of a group of state leaders failed. Mrs. Gandhi continues to

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weed out all cabinet officials who are not committed to her side, and the bitterness engendered by the present struggle is such that Congress faces its gravest test yet in maintaining party unity.



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Chile: [redacted] believes that Socialist Senator Salvador Allende will win next year's presidential election and says that he would accept an Allende government.

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[redacted] told the US Army attaché on Sunday that the army would not accept Jacques Chonchol, the leader of a radical leftist group that recently broke away from the governing Christian Democratic Party. Both Allende and Chonchol are vying for leftist and Communist support for the election next year.

Allende is a member of the most extremist major leftist group, and he is a strong admirer of Fidel Castro. He has been a presidential candidate three times. In 1958 he ran a close second to ex-President Jorge Alessandri who announced his independent, but conservative-supported, candidacy on 2 November. Schneider believes that the 73-year-old Alessandri is a "has been" and that there would be another military rebellion if he were elected.

The attaché reports that although Allende has some support among younger officers, this is the first time he has heard such a frank statement of support for Allende from a senior officer. The traditionally apolitical military is likely to become increasingly involved in politics as a result of the recent uprising. [redacted]

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Costa Rica: The Communist Party may yet gain representation in the legislature via the general elections next February.

Despite numerous legal reverses during their year-long campaign to legalize a front group, the Communists apparently will be able to run candidates under the banner of the Socialist Action Party (PASO), a Marxist revolutionary group led by Marcial Aguiluz. The electoral tribunal has recommended that the legislature proscribe the PASO, but such action appears unlikely before the legislature's scheduled adjournment on 30 November. By law, the legislative assembly must put aside all pending legislation on 1 November and deal solely with budget matters.

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[redacted]
[redacted] there is insufficient support in the assembly to obtain the two-thirds majority necessary to proscribe the PASO. [redacted]

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PASO's legislative candidate from Limon, Alvaro Montero Vega, continues to gain significant labor support in the countryside. Montero has led several successful strikes over the past year, and he is currently calling work stoppages among agricultural workers in Limon Province. [redacted]

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NATO: The North Atlantic Council will meet in special session today and tomorrow to discuss the major issues between East and West against the backdrop of a renewed Warsaw Pact appeal for a European security conference.

This meeting of the deputy foreign ministers and other high officials of the NATO countries has long been planned. It is intended as a prelude to the NATO ministerial conference in December. The discussions are now expected to take into account last week's call for an East-West meeting in Helsinki during the first half of 1970. So far there has been only limited official and media reaction from the principal West European capitals, but a consensus seems to be forming that NATO will have to take a forthcoming, although highly qualified, public stand on the Communist proposal.

Most of the Allies regard the most recent Warsaw Pact bid as a propaganda exercise that offers little hope for solution of the basic problems of European security. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] UK has noted that the Prague declaration ducks the hard issues dividing East and West, makes no mention of the idea of balanced force reductions, fails to cover nonintervention in internal affairs, and does not deal with US and Canadian participation in the proposed talks. Bonn is known to favor bilateral talks on renunciation of force before this question is taken up at a European conference. Paris has been reacting cautiously to the whole idea of such multilateral negotiations.

Despite these fundamental objections, the Allies are likely to agree that a NATO response cannot be postponed. The lack of polemics in the Prague declaration and the seeming reasonableness of its limited objectives may have popular appeal.

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It is likely that some sort of public announcement will be made which accepts the principal of an eventual, well-prepared conference on the concrete issues of European security with the full participation of the North American members of the Alliance.

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European Security: Soviet journalists in Moscow have said that the USSR intends to use its proposed European security conference as a new means for coordinating East European contacts with West European countries. One of the journalists remarked to a US Embassy officer that the Soviets learned from the Czechoslovak experience that bilateral dealings between East and West European states could get out of hand. The Soviets are presently concerned about possible new initiatives from the Brandt government to the East European states. Moscow apparently hopes that their security conference proposals will provide the Warsaw Pact countries with a framework for regulating such East-West exchanges.

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Ceylon - Communist China: Under a recently concluded rice-rubber agreement for 1970 Ceylon's imports of Chinese rice will remain at 200,000 tons, while its export of rubber will decline to 41,000 tons. The reduced amount of rubber, which is about one-third lower than this year's export, reflects a decline in the price of rice as well as an increase in the price of rubber on the world market. The rice-rubber exchange accounts for the bulk of trade between the two countries and has been carried out under a long-standing trade pact, extended for another five years in November 1967.

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【Brazil: Sao Paulo security officials last night killed Carlos Marighella, the leader of the country's most effective terrorist organization. His followers had a primary role in the kidnaping of US Ambassador Elbrick last September. Marighella's death will be a severe blow to Brazilian extreme leftists and they might possibly attempt some spectacular action both as a reprisal as well as a bid to restore badly damaged morale.

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